



Oriole, 1906

ex-USS *Dale*

Any of various Old World passerine birds of the family *Oriolidae*, of which the males are characteristically black and bright yellow or orange or any of various similar New World birds of the family *Icteridae*.

Builder:

Length: 117'

Beam: 32'

Draft: 15' 8"

Displacement: 556 tons

Cost: \$

Commissioned: 1839 (USN); 1906 (USRCS)

Decommissioned: 1921

Disposition: Returned to USN

Machinery:

Performance & Endurance:

Max: 13 knots

Cruising:

Complement: 150 (USN)

Armament: 14 x 32-pdrs; 2 x 12-pdrs (USN)

Cutter History:

The USS *Dale* was a Navy sloop-of-war, launched on 8 November 1839 by Philadelphia Navy Yard, and commissioned on 11 December 1839 under the command of Commander J. Gwinn, USN. *Dale's* first cruise, on which she sailed from Norfolk 13 December 1840, took her around Cape Horn to the Pacific Station. Based at Valparaiso, Chile, she patrolled the eastern waters of the vast ocean to protect American commerce and the whaling industry. Upon her return to the east coast in October 1843, she went into ordinary at New York until early in 1846, when she was refitted for a second cruise in the Pacific. Sailing from New York 6 June 1846, *Dale* arrived at Valparaiso 8 September, and cruised the coast of South America until ordered north for duty in the Mexican War. The sloop arrived off Monterey, Mexico, in January 1847, and through the remaining year of the war, cruised the coasts of Mexico and California. Not only did she capture several Mexican privateers and merchantmen, but landing parties she sent ashore raised the American flag over the towns of Guaymas and Muelje. Following the ending of the war in February 1848, *Dale* continued to patrol until the summer of 1849, when she sailed for the east coast, arriving at New York 22 August 1849.

In ordinary at New York between August 1849 and August 1850, *Dale* made three extended cruises along the African coast to suppress the slave trade until going out of commission in May 1859. She was recommissioned 30 June 1861 at Portsmouth, N.H., and sailed to join the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, capturing two schooners on her passage to Port Royal, South Carolina. Here she served as store and guard ship until sailing north for repairs 30 September 1862. *Dale* arrived at Key West 10 December 1862 for duty as ordnance store ship until 3 July 1865. She was decommissioned at Philadelphia 20 July 1865, and was in ordinary at Norfolk until recommissioned 29 May 1867. She served as training ship at the Naval Academy until 1884, then as receiving ship at Washington Navy Yard until 1894. Transferred to the Maryland Naval Militia in 1895, she was renamed *Oriole* on 30 November 1904, and transferred to the Revenue Cutter Service at Baltimore on 23 July 1906. She, along with the *Salmon P. Chase*, served as a dormitory-barracks ship for the cadets in the School of Instruction at Arundel Cove, Maryland. Revenue Captain J. P. Gray wrote that the:

"Depot workmen laid a hardwood flooring on the ORIOLE's spar deck to make a drill and dancing hall. Four large staterooms, each accommodating four cadets, a dining room and galley were built into the gun deck. Cadets on the ORIOLE were living in greater comfort than those on the CHASE. All was not perfect, however, for the ORIOLE had open seams and would sink every now and then, always around midnight, in eighteen inches of water -- signifying that the old Swede who was charged with tending the bilge pump had consumed too much schnapps."

She remained in service until 1921 when she was returned to the Navy and was then sold.

Sources:

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